

**CAMDEN RIVERWALK and PUBLIC LANDING PROJECT**  
**PUBLIC FORUM #2**  
**Minutes of Meeting – Comments Portion**  
**April 22, 2013**

The attendees broke out into nine groups led by facilitators from the Project Working Group. The groups were asked to address the following questions:

- a. Where are the positive aspects of the public landing that you like as it is now? What are negative aspects of the current situation?
- b. What would you like to see added? What hopes do you have for the area?
- c. Do you see the Public Landing a “Gateway” or a “Destination” ?
- d. Do you think there should be a bridge connecting the Public landing to Harbor Park? Are there other alternatives to connect the two places?

The following is a compilation of the various groups’ strongest thoughts and feelings on those issues.

**THE PUBLIC LANDING AS IT IS ~ LIKES AND DISLIKES**

*Positives – What We Like:*

- The view of the harbor from the landing is a huge asset. The area should be better utilized – this is a nationally famous harbor
- The view of the mountains is also important
- The working waterfront aspect of the public landing with both fishermen and day sailors. The landing is a hub of boating activity with lots of hustle and bustle and things happening, and with central access to information (Chamber, Harbor Master, boat tours)
- The multi-use aspect is good including having the Chamber here (more accessible to tourists than if it were located elsewhere) and the hot dog stand
- It is important to many people who visit often (sometimes daily) to keep the Boardwalk and its benches for sitting and viewing.
- Keep everything the same – just give it a “fresh coat of paint”, and improve pedestrian and traffic circulation and patterns
- It is nice to be able to drive right up to the water’s edge, sit in the car and look at the harbor in all kinds of weather
- The waterfalls

- The one tree still living on the landing
- It is quaint – there is no place else like it. It looks natural and not commercial
- The availability of parking provides accessibility to downtown. It is accessible at multiple points – from the water, and by car and by foot from Commercial Street, from Sharp’s Wharf, and down the alley from Main Street
- Harbor Dogs take out is fun, affordable, local, informal and friendly – keep them there

*Negatives – Concerns Regarding Development:*

- Any loss of parking on the Public Landing would negatively impact economic development
- Any changes to the layout of the Public Landing must address snow removal and emergency vehicle access
- Any changes made must benefit the entire community, not just businesses in the area
- Supportive of anything that improves public access and opposed to changes that would limit access
- All day parking on the landing is not needed – it takes spaces away from short term parking that is needed
- Business owners should not park at the landing
- Don’t make the landing look like everywhere else. Keep it Maine (natural and unpolished)

## **WHAT IS MISSING? WHAT SHOULD BE CHANGED?**

### **THE LANDING**

- More green areas - the whole area should be more like a park so the Town can take advantage of the incredible scenery
- Build a parking garage with “underground parking” and a park on the roof
- Re-configure and improve traffic patterns – leave the center of the landing for green space with parking around the perimeter

- Re-consider the dedicated parking spaces set aside for the day sailers and schooners. Now that there is more parking nearby they don't need as many spaces
- Provide handcarts to facilitate loading and unloading of boats and a shuttle service to outlying parking lots
- Safety of pedestrians and motorists on Commercial Street needs to be improved. Build up a sidewalk for pedestrians; use faux bricks to delineate walkways; and add some creative lighting – it is very dark very early in the morning and in the evening
- Need some picnic tables
- Need a better (safer) way for people arriving by dinghy to walk to Town
- Don't preclude multi-use of the Public Landing for events when making changes to the layout. The Town should look at the potential for increasing events as a selling point for the Town
- Find a way to incorporate the rear of the Main Street buildings into the area with plantings and grassy areas
- Install signage to direct people back to Main Street and along the harbor
- Move the phone pole in front of New England Real Estate

#### THE BOARDWALK

- Safety railings along the boardwalk was called for by many, but some said installing railings increases the Town's liability, and others claim that railings will obscure the view – as will too many plantings
- Add some low-level pathway lighting along the Boardwalk. No underwater lighting should be allowed
- Widen the boardwalk to allow room for people to pass in both directions. Determine if it can be built out over the water instead of widened on the land side
- Life saving rings should be placed at intervals along the boardwalk
- A fisherman's hoist for loading and unloading boats
- Spruce it up with landscaping along the edge and planters that can be moved for snow removal

*Aside from parking – what should be changed?*

- The Chamber of Commerce building should be re-located – the property is valuable and should be better used. The Chamber should be easier for people to access *before* they get downtown -- at the southern entrance to Town perhaps
- The Harbormaster's shack should be relocated off the boardwalk to open up the view of the harbor coming down Commercial Street – it doesn't need to be where it is
- The public restrooms should be relocated to the Chamber building. Showers and laundry facilities should be added
- The Harbormaster could share the same buildings as new restrooms/showers to save on costs and cut down on the number of buildings
- Clean up and improve the grassy area at the edge of the falls for a place to sit and look at the falls – a good place for picnic tables too
- Utilize Steamboat Landing as the location for boat tours and a launching place for kayaks. Encourage a water taxi and make this a stop
- The shops near Seabright Pizza need more visibility. Bringing better traffic, parking and pedestrian circulation to the area will help

#### **GATEWAY OR DESTINATION:**

- The Public Landing is both a Gateway to the Harbor and, as the focal point of downtown, it is a Destination. It should be more attractive
- It is the Gateway to Town for boaters coming into the harbor
- The Public Landing is the Gateway – the Destination is the Harbor
- The Public Landing is “Information Central” – the Chamber and Harbor Master are here, and it's the information destination

#### **THE BRIDGE**

<i>The Vote:</i>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Uncommitted</b>
Group 1:	4	6	1
Group 2:	3	2	2
Group 3:	This group didn't vote but voiced mixed feelings of support and opposition		

Group 4:	1	3	0
Group 5:	No votes – simply stated “No bridge”		
Group 6:	4	1	2
Group 7:	0	5	1
Group 8:	0	4	2
Group 9:	1	7	1

*Concerns:*

- Any kind of bridge would take away from the natural beauty of the waterfall spilling into the harbor. The falls are an attraction alone – don’t disrupt the view
- Visitors will avoid Main Street shops
- Would the investment show any returns re: economic development/jobs?
- The setting is historic and changing it may alter the historic character as well as detract from the falls
- What about repairs to the dam at the falls before the bridge is built; and who pays for maintenance and repair of the bridge
- What will the bridge cost? Some who voted “No” *may* be in favor if money is not an issue. Voters might reject the proposal if the plan is elaborate and expensive

*Supporting Arguments:*

- This would be a progressive change moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and create something new for visitors to remember Camden by
- This would be unique to Camden and another economic positive economic engine
- Waterside access to the Main Street shops could be part of the proposal to address the fear that visitors will be routed away from shops. A raised walkway with ramps connecting to individual shops at Main Street level would help move foot traffic to the shops
- It is important to create a connection from Main Street to the Landing and to the Park – it makes the Downtown bigger and more interesting and will reduce pressure on parking

*Alternatives:*

- Enhance and improve the assets we already have instead of creating something else that will require maintenance

- An observation deck would provide the same scenic overlook of the falls without compromising the falls
- A floating bridge or walkway below the falls to connect the Public Landing and Library Park
- An elevated boardwalk behind the Main Street buildings would end on the landing side of the waterfall. People would go back out to Main Street and enter the Park from there
- Harbor Park should be the end-point of the Riverwalk, not the Public Landing. People would walk back out to Main Street to reach the landing

Project documents are available on the Town's website (<http://www.camdenmaine.gov>) under the Riverwalk and Public Landing tab.